ROUNDTABLE ON CORRUPTION AND HUMAN SECURITY IN RUSSIA AND INDONESIA

-Rapporteur's Report-

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Roundtable participants met to discuss and develop ideas about the relationship between corruption and human security in Russia and Indonesia in the context of Canadian foreign policy. The discussion was guided by presentations made by Professor Errol Mendes and Yannick Hingorani of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, Ottawa University about the linkages between corruption and human security. Defined as the misuse of public office at the expense of the public good, corruption indirectly and directly affects a country's economic and political conditions, its social, economic, and political development, and the legitimacy of the government. As has been apparent in Russia and Indonesia, corruption creates the conditions of insecurity, such as economic stagnation, political instability, human rights violations, unequal social development, as well as augments the costs of public service, weakens social policy and undermines the judicial process. The absence of accountability further allows for the processes of governance and economic activity to be manipulated to the advantage and benefit of the few. In particular, the ineffective management of law enforcement agencies encourages the activities of organised. With no checks against the government and public offiicals, the state becomes weak and human security becomes threatened.

The participants also discussed macro and micro anti-corruption measures and the integration of such strategies into Canada's foreign policy. Those at the macro level include the establishment of conditions of transparency as part of bail-out packages, an enhancement of local autonomy and an increase in and strengthening of the participation of civil society. In efforts to find solutions, it is important to remember that there are different approaches to analysing and reacting to corruption which consider different social, political and economic causes of corruption. Thus, different causes, such as ineffective public sector financing, concessions, expropriation, and the presence of patrimonial relationships, each requires its own specific solutions. A note of optimism was raised with respect to the positive experiences of Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States against corruption by essentially removing the market for corrupt services. They pursued such policies as deconessionalisation, the breaking down of patrimonial relationships, legal sanctions, the creation of a civil political culture, and the introduction of incentives such as an increase in civil service salaries. In essence, structural and systemic changes are required, as are the demand for such changes and the political will to pursue and fulfill anti-corruption policies. Furthermore, these efforts must be accompanied by political legitimacy. Anti-corruption measures should target both the top and the bottom levels of the political and economic systems.

Canada can assist by focusing on accountability reform, especially with respect to civil service accountability, and with a strategy focusing on the independent media. These strategies, however, should be integrated into one another in order to present a more comprehensive anti-corruption program. Our own role in perpetuating corruption needs to be acknowledged, in particular where our first concern is often with realising development projects, which often end up sustaining corrupt practices. At the same time, some factors may complicate anti-corruption strategies. These factors

include fear, the perception of such activities not being corrupt, the absence of a capacity to organise against corruption, political culture, weak civil society, and the need for legal instruments to facilitate such organisation. Likewise, the capacity of international financial institutions (IFIs) to act against corruption needs to be improved.

In conclusion, the presenters noted that corruption in Russia and Indonesia should be of particular concern to Canada given its promotion of human security and its recent election to the UN Security Council, but also because both countries facing corruption problems are large and populous. Furthermore, Russia is a nuclear country, and Indonesia is an Islamic country facing the additional threat of fundamentalism. The questions that arise and which should be properly considered with respect to any projects in this regard include: Should Canada take the lead on any anti-corruption initiative, and why? What is gained by linking corruption to human security? In what fora should anti-corruption initiatives be pursued and at what level? Inter-governmental? Non-governmental? What role is there to be played for civil society?